

Appendix F. Letters of Support

This appendix includes several letters in support of the *Strategy* that were sent Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board in August 2005. Attached are letters from:

- Madison Audubon Society
- Milwaukee Public Museum
- Natural Resources Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Ruffed Grouse Society
- University of Wisconsin – Madison, Wildlife Ecology
- USDA Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Trout Unlimited
- WE Energies and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology
- Wisconsin Association of Lakes
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation



Madison Audubon Society, Inc.

222 S. Hamilton St., Suite #1

Madison, WI 53703-3201

--Making Time for Birds

11 August 2005

Gerald M. O'Brien, Chair

Wisconsin Natural Resources Board

Box 228

Stevens Point, WI 54481

Re: Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan

Dear Chairman O'Brien:

The Madison Audubon Society and the Wisconsin Audubon Council have closely followed and participated in conservation planning and funding opportunities for habitat and species work in Wisconsin for many years. Most recently I have served on the advisory committee for the implementation of the Land Legacy Report and on the advisory committee for the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan. I also participated in the recent State Wildlife Grant review process, and I currently chair the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI), a group of 148 partners working together on behalf of Wisconsin's birds.

Audubon and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative support the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan (CWCP), otherwise known as "Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need", and urge that the Board submit the Plan to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for review.

The CWCP has been through a long and thorough process of input from numerous experts along with many hours of discussion at meetings and during public input. WBCI was particularly interested in following the CWCP process and staying well-informed about all the steps required for it, as we had begun our "All-Bird Plan" prior to the CWCP effort. The All-Bird Plan will be more comprehensive (for birds), but because it was done in tandem with the CWCP, the two will be compatible.

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan has captured a huge amount of information from existing plans and work that has gone before (such as the Biodiversity Report and many other management and master plans that have been done over the years), melding it with new information about priority species and habitats and more, then incorporating it all into one resource. By making it an online document, the large amount of information that is in the CWCP is, literally, at our fingertips. While I haven't read every word of the CWCP as I did with the Land Legacy Report, I tried following several species of interest through the document and found that accessing the information and related information was quick and easy.

It is easy to see at a glance what the priorities are and where efforts can best be focused, which will be useful in helping direct and leverage dollars, both State Wildlife Grants and matching funds, to where they will do the most good. One way the CWCP will do this is by enhancing the formation of partnerships in developing ways to restore species, habitats, and landscape-scale projects by providing the means to connect and communicate with other organizations and agencies who share interests in working in various parts of the state.

We are looking forward to having the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan approved and then taking the next steps in Wisconsin of actually using the Plan for management strategies and on-the-ground work of restoring species. This should definitely not be a plan that sits on a shelf, but one that is actively used. One step in getting word out will be to develop outreach materials for the general public. Our hope is that all managers of land, but especially DNR land managers, will use the large amount of good information that the plan encompasses.

Sincerely,

Karen Etter Hale
Chair, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative
Executive Secretary, Madison Audubon Society
2nd Vice President, Wisconsin Audubon Council

cc: members of the Natural Resources Board
Secretary Scott Hassett
Signe Holtz
Jill Mrotek

August 15, 2005

Office of the President

Natural Resources Board
P. O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Attention: Gerald M. O'Brien, Chairman

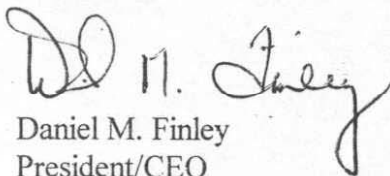
Dear Natural Resources Board:

As the largest human and natural history museum in the state, and with a long tradition of research on and interpretation of Wisconsin's natural heritage for a wide array of audiences, the Milwaukee Public Museum urges your acceptance of and support for *Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need*.

A tremendous amount of work has gone into the plan, with MPM scientists participating along with DNR staff, other non-government organization partners, reviewers and input from the public to formulate this strategy. We applaud the effort made by all involved, and are hopeful that implementation of the plan will address the most pressing conservation needs for Wisconsin's wildlife at greatest risk.

We look forward to continuing work with you and the team partners in efforts to conserve and foster greater understanding of and appreciation for Wisconsin's rich biological heritage.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel M. Finley
President/CEO

cc: Scott Hassett, WDNR
Signe Holtz, WDNR
✓ Jill Mrotek, WDNR

PO Box 2317
Madison, WI 53701-2317

TOLL-FREE
866.264.4096

FAX
608.266.2452

E-MAIL
conservation@nrfwis.org

www.nrfwis.org

Board of Directors

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Program Assistant

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AUG 9 2005

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY

August 8, 2005

Gerald M. O'Brien, Chair
Natural Resources Board
C/o Amy Lemberger
WDNR-AD/5
Madison WI 53707-7921

Dear Chairman O'Brien,

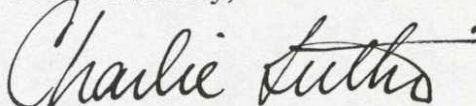
At the forthcoming Natural Resources Board meeting, you will be reviewing the **Draft Wisconsin Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need**. Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin endorses this important and vital conservation document and encourages the Board to approve the Strategy.

The Strategy has been over a year in the making, and is a remarkable product that the Board should be proud to support. Some of the best professional wildlife experts, biologists and land managers in the state were instrumental in writing this Strategy, and a whole host of interested parties (agencies, non-profit organizations, scientists) participated in this prioritizing effort. The process was fully inclusive of public input, and comments have been received and reviewed by the Strategy preparers. It has been one of the most extraordinary collaborative projects I have had the pleasure of being involved in, albeit in a modest capacity on the Advisory Team.

This Strategy, to be submitted to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will be a useful document for many years to come. It will not only enable Wisconsin to receive vital state wildlife grants, but it will also guide conservation initiatives, programs and priorities by the DNR, other conservation agencies, and the non-profit community. As a financial supporter of DNR programs, Natural Resources Foundation will use this document to help identify the most important projects needing support.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important conservation tool, and I am hopeful that the Board will support and accept the Strategy.

Yours sincerely,



Charles S. Luthin
Executive Director





The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin
633 West Main Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

tel 608/251-8140
fax 608/251-8535
nature.org/wisconsin

August 15, 2005

Dear DNR Board Member,

I am writing in support of the excellent State Wildlife Comprehensive Plan recently completed by the Department of Natural Resources. It will be a very useful planning document that will direct public and private funds to the most critical species and habitats.

We applaud the efforts of the Department to focus the planning effort on a subset of the state's wildlife. This decision will help focus limited resources on those declining species and habitats that are not only rare in Wisconsin, but where Wisconsin has a good opportunity to help restore and secure globally declining species and habitats. It also provides Wisconsin an opportunity to take proactive steps to keep species off the endangered species list.

The Conservancy appreciates the emphasis on monitoring in the plan. Monitoring the impact of strategies implemented under the State Wildlife Program allows future management to be more effective, fostering management within an adaptive management framework.

To conclude, we applaud the Department for the excellent plan, and look forward to seeing conservation organizations, including the Conservancy, actively participate in projects to improve the plight of at risk species.

We appreciate the opportunity to have served on the Steering Committee and comment on the draft State Comprehensive Wildlife Plan. The Conservancy looks forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to conserve the biological diversity that represents Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean Huston
State Director
The Nature Conservancy



The Ruffed Grouse Society

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE



GARY ZIMMER
Regional Biologist

P. O. Box 116
Laona, WI 54541
(715) 674-7505
(715) 674-7540 Fax
rgszimm@newnorth.net

July 29, 2005

Natural Resources Board
Attn: Amy Lemberger, AD/5
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Dear Chairman O'Brien and Natural Resources Board Members:

The Ruffed Grouse Society supports the Strategy for Wisconsin's Species of Greatest Conservation Need that is being presented at your August 16-17 Board Meeting. I have represented the Society on the Advisory Team for this project and know first hand the time and commitment put forth for this effort by personnel from the Department of Natural Resources. They have worked hard to keep those interested in wildlife conservation in the loop with this developing strategy. The Society is pleased with the breath of species and habitats being considered and looks forward at working closely with the Department and other partners to improve habitat and populations of many of these species in the future.

The Strategy for Wisconsin's Species of Greatest Conservation Need is an important starting point for creating and maintaining essential habitats utilized by the state's diversity of wildlife species. It is an important assessment of where we are at and provides the basis for where we are going to insure that the needs of the species and habitats identified are addressed in the future.

The Ruffed Grouse Society is dedicated to improving the environment for ruffed grouse, American woodcock, as well as for other forest wildlife. The Society looks forward to continuing the cooperative spirit of working together with the Department as we address the needs of these species, including several very important to our members.

Sincerely,

Gary Zimmer
Regional Wildlife Biologist

Cc: Scott Hassett, DNR Secretary
Signe Holtz, BER
Jill Mrotek - Green Bay

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
451 McCormick Road
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108-9377
(412) 262-4044 • www.ruffedgrousesociety.org
e-mail: rgshq@aol.com

From: SCOTT R CRAVEN [srcraven@facstaff.wisc.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2005 11:49 AM
To: Lemberger, Amy J
Cc: Holtz, Signe L; Mrotek, Jill
Subject: support for CWCP

To: Chairman O'Brien and the Natural Resources Board
From: Scott Craven, Professor and Chair, Dept of Wildlife Ecology, UW- Madison
Re: Support for the CWCP document

At the next NRB meeting in Spooner you will have an opportunity to approve the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan document, thus clearing the way for the Plan to be sent on for federal approval. I have been involved in the process of plan development since the first meeting of the "plan team" about 18 months ago. I urge your approval of the plan. It is the result of a massive planning effort on a complex topic involving many species. A lot of highly dedicated, thoughtful people in and out of the DNR put a tremendous amount of effort into the plan and it shows. The document will lead to much needed federal funds for use in Wisconsin and it will serve to guide management efforts and as a reference document for many years to come.

Thank you for your support of the species in most need of attention.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

CHEQUAMEGON-NICOLET NATIONAL FOREST

Park Falls Supervisor's Office

1170 4TH Avenue South

Park Falls, WI 54552

715-762-2461

715-762-5701 (TTY)

715-762-5179 (Fax)

Internet: www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf

Rhineland Supervisor's Office

68 S. Stevens St.

Rhineland, WI 54501

715-362-1300

715-362-1383 (TTY)

715-362-1359 (Fax)

File Code: 1560

Date: August 8, 2005

Gerald O'Brien
Chair
Natural Resources Board
Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

I understand the Natural Resources Board will soon be asked to review the recently completed Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Strategy).

Two members of my staff, Dan Eklund and Linda Parker, have served on the Advisory Team for the development of this Strategy. We would like to offer our praise for the Strategy. In particular, we are pleased to see that ecosystems and landscapes serve as the framework for the Strategy. This seems to be a logical and efficient method for addressing the conservation needs of such a long list of species.

The planning team and regional ecologists have assembled an impressive document. I'm sure it will be of great value to our staff.

We very much look forward to working with the Department of Natural Resources and our other partners to implement many of the conservation actions and ecological opportunities identified in this Strategy

Sincerely,

ANNE F. ARCHIE
Forest Supervisor

cc: Daniel A Eklund, Linda R Parker



August 12, 2005

Gerald O'Brien
Chairman
Wisconsin Natural Resources Board
Box 228
Stevens Point, WI 54481-0228

Dear Chairman O'Brien:

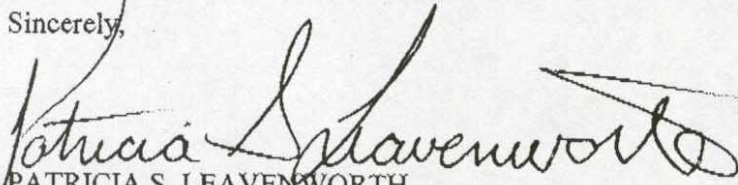
I am writing this letter in support of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's (WDNR) *Wisconsin's Draft Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need: A Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan*. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff participated in the development and review of this extensive document as an Advisory Team member. This Strategy reflects an extraordinary effort by WDNR staff to assemble detailed documentation for each of the selected conservation need species and their critical habitats. Acceptance of the Strategy is necessary to obtain Federal funds that will benefit efforts to restore and enhance Wisconsin's fish and wildlife habitat.

Wisconsin NRCS supports the WDNR's efforts to be proactive in identifying and protecting declining species and their habitats through implementing the policy and procedures provided through the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. The ranking systems established for funding potential projects through the NRCS's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) award applicants additional ranking points for establishing, enhancing, or restoring habitat for Federal or State listed species.

The new USDA Conservation Security Program (CSP) is designed to provide financial incentives to the best conservation farmers in designated watersheds for their efforts to protect soil from erosion, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat on their operations. The wildlife species and habitats targeted in the CSP watersheds are selected from the Wisconsin list of declining species. Enhancement payments are also available to CSP participants who are willing to improve habitat for species identified in the Strategy. As additional watersheds become eligible for CSP sign-ups, the information contained in the Strategy will be used to identify the species of greatest conservation need for habitat improvement.

Please consider approving the Strategy document for submission to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Acceptance Advisory Team.

Sincerely,



PATRICIA S. LEAVENWORTH
State Conservationist

cc:

Scott Hassett, Secretary, WDNR, Madison, Wisconsin
Signe Holtz, Chief, Bureau of Endangered Resources, WDNR, Madison, Wisconsin
Jill Mrotek, Regional Planner, WDNR, Green Bay, Wisconsin
Patrick Murphy, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Madison, Wisconsin



August 31, 2005
12870 West Shore Drive
Mountain, WI 54149

To: Gerald O'Brien
Chair, Wisconsin Natural Resources Board

Mr. O'Brien:

I had the pleasure of sitting with the Advisory Team for development of the WI Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. I recommend that the DNR Board accept it and forward the "Strategy" to the national level with confidence and pride. It is well done and the most practical approach to heading off problems.

In brief, species were selected by the committee with input from the most knowledgeable people within the DNR, UW faculty, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Service, College of Natural Resources at Stevens Point and other resources, such as the Milwaukee Public Museum. The trout experts have been known, and their work admired by those of us who have worked with TU for years. They know the ecologic niches, plainly the practical approach to species protection.

As I spoke with other partners, the Audubon Society, Wisconsin Lakes Association for instance, they shared our confidence in the expertise and good sense of the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bob Obma, MD

Cc: Howard Poulson, Jonathan Ela, Herbert Behnke, Christine Thomas, John Welter, Stephen Willett, Scott Hassett, Signe Holtz, Jill Mrotek. *NER/GB*

Bill Pielsticker, Chair
8045 Crystal Lake Rd.
Lodi, WI 53555

Jim Hlaban, Vice-Chair
N5967 Murray Rd.,
Ogdensburg, WI 54962

Jeff Ware, Secretary
14092 Spring Valley Rd.
Fennimore, WI 53809

3352 Knollwood
West Bend WI 53095
August 11, 2005

Natural Resources Board Chairman
O'Brien and all NRB Members:

I have participated from the beginning on the Advisory Team for *Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need: A Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan* (Plan). I have represented the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. and We Energies on this Team.

The approach taken by the Department was thorough and comprehensive, and the involvement of an external team strengthened the effort tremendously. What was accomplished in this Plan dove-tails nicely with other avian work that is being accomplished as part of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI). Taken together, I can not imagine that any other state is positioned as well as Wisconsin when it comes to bird conservation planning efforts.

The preparation of the Plan required the tireless dedication and work of a large number of Department employees, and coming at a time when staff shortages abound, this is an accomplishment that the entire state should revel in when we think about the future of wildlife in the state.

The State Wildlife Grant program is critically important to Wisconsin, and this Plan sets forth a strategy that addresses and will help guide conservation efforts so that species can avoid becoming threatened or endangered. I've just spent my 7th consecutive day working at the Wisconsin State Fair at We Energies' Energy Park where I've been helping put on 3 raptor shows daily. I can assure you that the citizens of Wisconsin are extremely interested in species like the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Osprey, and they strongly desire not to see species in the future become as imperiled as these species were in the past. Having this robust Plan in place positions Wisconsin well for the future to address wildlife species conservation needs.

Please approve this Plan for submission to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Noel J. Cutright
WSO Past President
We Energies Senior Scientist**

**Cc: Secretary Scott Hassett
Signe Holtz
Jill Mrotek**



WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF LAKES, INC.

ONE POINT PLACE, SUITE 101 • MADISON, WI 53719-2809 • 800/542-5253 (in WI) • 608/662-0923 • FAX 608/833-7179

August 9, 2005

Mr. Gerald M. O'Brien
Chair, Wisconsin Natural Resources Board
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

On behalf of the members and Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, I wish to extend our support for the *Strategy for Wisconsin's Species of Greatest Conservation Need*.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) is a non-profit group of citizens, organizations and businesses working for clean, safe, healthy lakes for everyone. With more than 100,000 riparian property owners that are members of approximately 350 lake organizations throughout the state of Wisconsin, WAL recognizes the importance of healthy ecosystems, watersheds and wildlife habitats.

There are many benefits to this strategy. Those that we would highlight include the importance of protecting habitats as a means to protect endangered species, and the building of partnerships and collaborative approaches to conserving habitats and species at local levels.

With many of Wisconsin's natural resources under private ownership, we recognize the state needs partners to carry out its mandate. Development of this *Strategy* by itself reflects the ability of the department to build these partnerships, and the interest of many organizations and individuals to work on this project.

We recommend your approval and endorsement.

Sincerely,

Peter T. Murray
Executive Director

Cc: Members of the NRB
Mr. P. Scott Hassett
Ms. Signe Holtz
Ms. Jill Mrotek

email: wal@wisconsinlakes.org / website: www.wisconsinlakes.org

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes is a nonprofit group of citizens, organizations, and businesses working for clean, safe, healthy lakes for everyone.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Jim Doyle
Governor

Frank J. Busalacchi
Secretary

Office of the Secretary
4802 Sheboygan Ave., Rm. 120B
P.O. Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

Telephone: 608-266-1113
FAX: 608-266-9912
E-Mail: sec.exec@dot.state.wi.us

August 29, 2005

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Board
PO Box 7921
Madison WI 53707

Dear Chairman O'Brien and Board Members:

We have reviewed the strategy written for the State Wildlife Grants program that came before you in your August meeting.

We are encouraged to see DNR develop strategies to proactively conserve wildlife before they are listed as Endangered or Threatened, and to attract federal money to help toward that same end. We understand that this plan does not answer all questions but we also understand no document could in any reasonable time frame. Given our knowledge on many species, the strategy is well thought out and is a prudent first step toward reducing future listed species.

WisDOT spends several million dollars each year to mitigate or avoid listed species. But neither Wisconsin DNR nor WisDOT can do all that is needed to protect some species from population declines. We welcome the encouragement of partnerships contained in this plan, at the local and state level, and public and private sectors.

This State Wildlife Grants plan and program will establish an essential foundation for the future of wildlife conservation in Wisconsin. This plan outlines a beginning to conserve species before serious declines, and greater costs for recovery occur. Thank you for the opportunity to participate and offer our support for this strategy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Frank J. Busalacchi".

Frank J. Busalacchi
Secretary

cc: Jill Mrotek – DNR-Northeast Region